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ABSTRACT

"Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America," a report about the interrelationships among self-esteem, education, and career aspirations in adolescent girls and boys in today's society, received widespread attention on its release. The American Association of University Women asked the Academy for Educational Development to review the data gathered by Greenberg-Lake (the analysis group for the original report) and focus primarily on the 290 Latinas, aged 9 to 15 years, in the nationally representative sample of 2,399 young females. Review of the data suggests that: (1) an ethnic and racial gap in the self-esteem of girls increases with age; (2) the sense of self-value in the family declines for older Latina adolescents; (3) low academic pride is a factor in the low level of Latina self-esteem; and (4) teachers often neglect the opportunity to positively affect the self-esteem of their female students, especially Latinas. Lowering of aspirations occurs with the lowering of self-esteem experienced by Latina adolescents. Results indicate that Latinas are likely to find less support at home or in school than other young women growing up in U.S. society. (Contains 16 tables, 13 figures, and 7 references.) (SLD)

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ED 387 557

Shortchanging Hispanic Girls

An analysis of Hispanic girls in the Greenberg-Lake Survey of self-esteem, education, and career aspirations among adolescent girls and boys in the United States

Commissioned by
The American Association of University Women

Prepared by
The Academy for Educational Development

June 1992

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Background 2

II. Findings 7

A. An ethnic/racial gap in the self-esteem of girls increases with age
B. The sense of self-value within the family declines for older Latinas
C. Low academic pride is also a factor in the low level of Latina self-esteem
D. Teachers often neglect the opportunity to positively affect the self-esteem of their female students, especially Latinas
E. A lowering of aspirations for Latinas also occurs with the diminished self-esteem

III. Conclusion 19

IV. References 23

V. Appendices 24

A. Bar Graphs
B. Tables

Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America, a report about the interrelationships among self-esteem, education, and career aspirations in adolescent girls and boys in today's society, received widespread media attention upon its release last year.

The report, based on a survey conducted by Greenberg-Lake: the Analysis Group in late 1990, was commissioned by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) as part of its major initiative to understand the critical changes in attitudes and identity of girls and boys and to apply that understanding to adolescent experience and its effects on later life choices.

Early this year AAUW asked the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to study the Greenberg-Lake survey data, focusing primarily on the 290 Latinas,* ages 9-15, in the nationally representative sample of 2,399 young females. A large majority of the Latinas in the sample were from Texas and California and are probably of Mexican descent. The original survey contained 75 Hispanic males, a number which is considered too small to use consistently and reliably in this study. Except for one particularly appropriate instance, the male responses are not used.

The data for the original study were collected at the same time from three separate groups of elementary, middle, and high school girls. While such a research design can yield meaningful comparisons, it is not as useful as a

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* The use of "Latino" or "Hispanic" depends primarily on geographic location throughout the United States. Both terms are often used interchangeably in the literature to refer to people from Spanish speaking-countries and their descendants. For ease of use in referring to Hispanic females, "Latina" is most often used in this study.

longitudinal design in which data are collected from the same subjects at three different times. Such a design allows the analyst to study changes over time in the same subjects. In reading this study, it is important to recall this distinction.

This report is organized into three major sections: a background section, describing the demographic and educational characteristics of United States Hispanics; a section on the study's major findings; and a conclusion that places some of the findings in the context of the research literature.

The principal author of the report is Dr. Rafael Valdivieso, vice president of the Academy for Educational Development and director of the School and Community Services division. The data analyses were conceived by program officer Dr. Anita Baker and conducted by research associate Lesley Hirsch. They were assisted by Michelle Hynes, who edited and prepared this report.

BACKGROUND

The Hispanic population in 1991 totaled 22.4 million people, or 9% of the United States' population. Hispanics are composed of a number of diverse groups. The largest by far is the Mexican-American group (64 percent), followed by Central and South Americans (13.7 percent), Puerto Ricans (10.5 percent), Cubans (4.9 percent), and other Hispanics. The economic circumstances of these groups vary, their immigration histories are different, and they tend to live in different parts of the country.

One-quarter of all Hispanic families are poor; and, therefore, many Hispanic children are likely to live below the poverty line. In 1990, 38 percent of Hispanic children, compared to 44 percent of African-American children and 15 percent of white children, lived in families with incomes below the poverty line.

The Hispanic population is growing at a fast pace, and, consequently, so is the Hispanic student population, which is now 11.2 percent of the total student population. In 1989, 20 percent of students in public schools in central cities were Hispanic, up from 11 percent in 1972.

Hispanics do not fare well in U.S. schools. Because many Hispanic parents are foreign-born, many Hispanic children are likely to hear and speak Spanish at home and are usually limited in their English proficiency when they first attend school. They have higher dropout rates than their African-American or white counterparts. Their performance on standardized achievement tests is low and their failure rates are high.

The following are highlighted differences between Hispanics and other students by school level.

Preschool. Hispanic 3- and 4-year-olds (20 percent) were less likely in 1989 to attend nursery school compared to African-American children (30 percent) and white children (40 percent).

Elementary. Hispanic 13-year-old students are generally more likely to be below grade level than their white counterparts. The gap between Hispanic and

whites in the proportion of 13-year-old girls below grade level is large — 37 percent for the Hispanics and 21 percent for the whites.

Secondary School. While Hispanics have made some educational gains during the past two decades, their gains did not match those of African-Americans and they are still considerably behind whites.

The number of credits Hispanics take in academic subjects has increased. The Hispanics in the high school class of 1987 took 15 credits, compared to 13 in 1969. However, only about 25 percent of Hispanics in the *High School and Beyond* data base were enrolled in college preparatory or academic tracks.

Fewer Hispanics complete high school. In 1991, only 50 percent of Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds had completed high school, compared to 81 percent of African-Americans and 90 percent of whites.

Higher Education. A majority of the Hispanics who go on to college enroll in a two-year college. In the fall of 1990, Hispanics were 8 percent of two-year college students and 4 percent of four-year college students. African-Americans were about 10 percent of two-year and 8 percent of four-year college students. Moreover, the *High School and Beyond* study, a nationally representative and longitudinal survey from the 1980s, indicates that 10 percent fewer Hispanic men than women attend two-year colleges. This concentration in two-year colleges limits further post-secondary educational opportunities for Hispanics. A disproportionate percentage of Hispanic females report that they prefer to attend

college, especially community college, close to home in order to remain close to their families.

Specific gender differences between Hispanic males and females in education are sketchy because of the prevalent trend in the literature to compare racial/ethnic groups without regard to gender. But the limited evidence points to differences between Hispanic males and females in educational achievement, retention, and attainment; and these differences do not always parallel the gender differences among non-Hispanics.

For example, Valerie Lee (1985) found in analyzing the *High School and Beyond* database that Hispanic and white females of low socioeconomic status appear to be equally disadvantaged in math achievement. However, while white females score above white males in both reading and vocabulary, Hispanic females score below Hispanic males in both verbal areas.

Hispanic females tend to drop out of high school slightly earlier than Hispanic males, but have slightly lower overall dropout rates as will be described below. Early marriage and/or pregnancy are the top two reasons cited by young Hispanic women in the *High School and Beyond* survey for dropping out of school. One-third of these female dropouts reported they left because of marriage or plans to marry, and one-fourth also cited pregnancy as their reason for leaving school. Alternatively, about 26% of the Hispanic male dropouts indicated that they left school because they had chosen to work or were offered a job.

The rates of non-completers of high school among 16- to 24-year olds display greater gender differences among Hispanics compared to whites and African-Americans during the period of 1973 to 1990. The rates also indicate the large group differences among Hispanics, whites, and African-Americans.

White female non-completion rates declined from 1973 to 1990. The white male rates parallel the female rates during the same time period, but have usually been a percentage point or so higher than the female rates.

The rates of both African-American males and females declined remarkably during this same time span. During this period, however, the non-completion rates for both Latino males and females fluctuated. Taken separately, the Latina non-completion rate declined, while the male rate increased from 1973 to 1990. Around 1980, the Latino non-completion rate began to exceed the Latina rate — a reversal of the pattern from the 1970s. In sum, the African-American non-completion rates have declined to within a few percentage points of the white rates, but the Hispanic rates are still about three times greater than the white rates.

The large overall difference between Hispanic males and females and the males and females of the other two groups, in terms of high school completion among 16- to 24-year-olds, is sometimes attributed to the large proportion of undereducated Hispanic youths that have immigrated into the United States. Recent research by the National Center for Educational Statistics indicates that this assertion is true, but that the rates among Hispanics of the second, third and later generations also exceed the non-completion rates of comparable non-Hispanics.

Therefore, even after eliminating recent immigration and limited English language proficiency as factors, the Hispanic educational disadvantage remains.

FINDINGS

1. An ethnic/racial gap in the self-esteem of girls increases with age.

The Greenberg-Lake group found that more boys than girls enter adolescence with high self-esteem. While the older high school students of both sexes had lower self-esteem than the younger students, the gap among the older students was even larger because of a steeper decline in self-esteem among females in their adolescence.

A similar pattern occurs among the three largest ethnic groups of females in the original survey. More African-American girls than either Latinas or white girls enter adolescence with high self-esteem. While the self-esteem of older African-American girls is the same or slightly lower than their younger counterparts, the decline in self-esteem is much deeper for white and Latina adolescents. On some measures of self-esteem, the differences between middle and high school are even greater for Latinas than whites.

Figure A shows that 45 percent of the African-American elementary school girls say, "I like most things about myself." Thirty-seven percent of the Latinas agree ("always true") with this statement. The difference among their high school counterparts grows to 25 percentage points, with 50 percent of the African-American girls and only 25 percent of the Latinas agreeing with this statement. On

this measure of self-esteem, the pattern for white girls falls below those for the African-American girls and Latinas with 35 percent of white elementary school girls and 19 percent of their high school counterparts agreeing with the statement.

The pattern for African-American girls shown in Figure A, in which they display higher self-esteem on this measure than Latinas and white girls at all three school levels, is similar to the other four measures of basic individual self-esteem used by Greenberg-Lake: "I like the way I look," "I'm happy the way I am," "Sometimes I don't like myself that much," and "I wish I were somebody else." (For more detail, see Figures B and C, and Table 1 in the appendix.) The only exception is that a slightly higher percentage of elementary school Latinas say, "I'm happy the way I am" ("always true") than their African-American counterparts.

Latinas and white girls alternate, depending on the self-esteem measure, as to who has lower self-esteem than African-American girls, but Latinas generally display the sharpest drops between middle and high school in the self-esteem measures.

Some may ask why the African-American adolescents have better scores on these self-esteem measures, given the discrimination and obvious material disadvantages they face in U.S. society. First, it should be noted, the better results for African-American self-esteem have been found in a number of nationally representative surveys over the last several years. It is apparent from research that, even with the contemporary influences of school and the norms of

mainstream American society, the different ways in which children from various backgrounds see themselves is still greatly shaped by the cultural influences of their homes and communities: one's self-esteem is not necessarily connected to the status the larger society ascribes to members of one's racial or ethnic group.

As Greenberg-Lake points out, family and community reinforcement sustain high levels of esteem and personal importance for African-American girls, but such girls feel strong pressure from the school system and drop significantly in positive feelings about their teachers and their schoolwork.

Older Latina adolescents and, to a lesser extent, their white peers also have less positive feelings about their teachers and schoolwork; but both groups experience sharp declines, compared to African-American adolescents, in their sense of importance and well-being within their families.

2. The sense of self-value within the family declines for older Latinas.

As Latino children grow older, they are more likely to follow traditional gender roles: high school boys are likely to have paying jobs, while the girls are likely to assist and, sometimes, take over household chores and the care of younger siblings, especially if the mother works outside the home.

Statistics indicate that the labor force participation rate of Latinos is greater than for either African-American or white males, while the rate for the Latinas is the lowest of any group. The older adolescent Latina plays an important role in the

family, but, in most families, her contribution may not be as valued as the work of a son who contributes to the family income.

In one of the two items that specifically measures respondents' sense of self-value within the family unit — "I am an important member of my family" — Latinas fared the worst overall by a wide margin (see Figure D). Older Latinas report themselves less valuable within the family unit than their younger counterparts. Far fewer high school-level Latinas (36 percent) responded "always true" to that item than middle (49 percent) or elementary school-level Latinas (57 percent).

The comparable figures for Latino males on the elementary school (67 percent), middle school (53 percent), and high school levels (44 percent), reveal three salient features: (1) their sense of self-value within the family is higher overall than the Latinas'; (2) this sense of self-value is lower in comparison to African-American and white males; and (3) in a trend similar to Latinas, high school level Latinos show a declined sense of importance within the family compared to their elementary school level counterparts.

The same pattern is found in the second item of this measure, "I feel good about myself with my family." (See Figure E.) A lower percentage of Latinas at the high school level (38 percent) reported feeling good about themselves with their families than at either the middle (59 percent) or elementary school levels (79 percent). Lower percentages of white female respondents reported feeling good about themselves with their families (particularly at the high school level).

The expectations for a daughter in a working-class Latino family is that she will remain with the family until she marries. If she goes to college, she is not expected to leave home to do so. It is also expected that she will have children soon after marriage. These traditional expectations are not, of course, always followed, especially not by Latinas who are more acculturated to mainstream American ways.

Figure F shows how dimly some Latinas end up viewing the roles of homemaker and mother. All the girls were asked if they would like being or enjoy being someone who stays home and takes care of the children. Fifty-five percent of the white females in elementary school said yes, and fewer high school girls responded similarly (46 percent). The African-American girls at the elementary school level have the dimmest view of the roles. Only 31 percent approved. At the high school level, only 24 percent responded that they would like or enjoy this role. The Latinas display the most dramatic shift in views. While nearly half (48 percent) of the elementary school-age Latinas approved, only 17 percent approved of the roles on the high school level. This is a negative difference of 31 percentage points.

Despite the overwhelming majorities of Latinas in middle school (67 percent) and in high school (83 percent) who disapprove of the roles, more than one-third (38 percent) at the middle and high levels (35 percent) still believe that they would assume these roles (see Figure G).

3. Low academic pride is also a factor in the low level of Latina self-esteem.

For most adolescent Latinas, as with most adolescents, academic confidence is at least as important as feelings of importance within the family in the development of their self-image and self-esteem.

The Greenberg-Lake study found that the self-esteem of young women suffers as they find that adults, including their teachers, do not believe females can do the things that they, themselves, believe they can. Boys generally have the opposite experience. They find people believe males can do things. This general belief contributes to males experiencing less of a loss of self-esteem during their adolescence than females.

Greenberg-Lake also found that academic pride plays a much smaller role in the structure of boys self-esteem. The sense of confidence in their ability to do things correlates more strongly with general self-esteem than with aspects of academic confidence or academic self-esteem. Sports, for example, provides many boys with a source of confidence in their ability to do things.

Academic self-esteem also plays a smaller role in the structure of general self-esteem in African-American girls. This helps explain why their self-esteem does not decline as much as Latinas and white girls, even though they face a school situation at least as discouraging. They, in fact, do not achieve well in school, and their confidence in their ability to do well in important subjects, such as math, plummets (see Figure H). The self-esteem of African-American girls, then, is

not as dependent on academic self-esteem, but relies more on other factors, especially the sense of importance derived from their homes and communities.

The academic self-esteem of Latinas and white girls is more correlated to their general self-esteem than African-American girls. Figure H shows, however, that Latinas' confidence in their math ability is actually lower than the African-American girls at all three levels of school. Furthermore, Figure I indicates that Latinas are the least pleased with their school grades of the three groups of girls (African-American, Latina, and white) at all three levels of school.

Apparently, Latinas have few sources of confidence from which to draw upon. By high school, they seem to have passed through more confidence-deflating experiences than either African-American or white girls. Figure J displays how elementary school girls start out as much as the other girls believing that "I'm pretty good at a lot of things." But by high school their general confidence in doing things has plummeted 33 percentage points.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the Latina's sense of importance as a person is so low, as shown in Figure K. Thirty-nine percent of the elementary school Latinas said "I am an important person," while an even smaller percentage (27 percent) at the high school level said so. The African-American girls' sense of importance is actually higher in high school than in elementary school.

4. The opportunity for teachers to positively affect the self-esteem of their female students, especially Latinas, is often neglected.

Girls clearly identify with their teachers and want to be teachers themselves. Far fewer boys, at any grade, aspire to be teachers. Almost three-quarters of all elementary school girls said that they would enjoy being a teacher. At the high school level, girls' enthusiasm for being teachers has dropped considerably, but it is still the second most desired occupation at that school level. As shown in Figure L, Latina enthusiasm for being a teacher runs nearly parallel to the majority of girls as it drops to 54 percent. The decline is the sharpest among high-school African-American girls, with only 44 percent wanting to be teachers.

Despite the high enthusiasm for teaching, even among Latinas, girls do not fare well in the classroom, compared to their interest in participating in classroom activities. Table A on page 16 lists several characteristics, positive and negative, of classroom behavior involving teachers and students. On the average, across the three school levels, fewer Latinas reported positive classroom characteristics than did African-American or white females. Only two positive characteristics ("likes to answer questions" and "likes to ask questions") were identified by more than one-half of the Latina respondents, while five of the six characteristics were identified by one-half of the white female respondents, and all six were identified by the African-American female respondents.

These percentages reveal a desire ("likes to answer questions" and "likes to ask questions") on the part of Latinas which exceeds their actual participation in classroom activities ("speaks out" and "raises hand and answers a lot"). Less than half (49 percent) of the Latinas said they get called on as often as others, and only

about one-third (32 percent) said that "the teacher calls on me." Only thirty-seven percent of the Latinas said "teachers listen to my ideas."

High, approximately equivalent percentages of Latina, African-American and white females reported negative classroom characteristics. Three-quarters or more of the respondents across race/ethnicity reported "knowing something and the teacher doesn't recognize it." Nearly two-thirds of all female respondents, regardless of race/ethnicity, reported "having things to say and the teacher won't allow it."

TABLE A: Percentage of female students reporting positive and negative classroom characteristics, by race/ethnicity.

Positive Characteristics	African-Amer	Latina	White
Likes to answer questions	76	61	66
Likes to ask questions	66	51	51
Speaks out	55	43	54
Raises hand and answers a lot	55	40	51
Gets called on as often as others	53	49	62
Teacher calls on me*	48	32	39
Teachers listen to my ideas	46	37	40
Negative Characteristics			
Knows something and teacher doesn't recognize	78	78	75
Have things to say and teacher won't allow	64	61	63

* The percentages represent combined "a lot" and "often" responses.to this item. All other percentages listed in this table represent answers to "yes/no" - type questions.

While most girls, then, have positive attitudes towards teachers and participation in the classroom, many, including the majority of Latinas, do not have corresponding positive experiences in the classroom. Ir fact, teachers were a declining source of confidence for girls, as displayed in Figure M. The girls' belief that their teachers are always proud of them declines considerably over the three

levels of schools. Once again, Latinas have the lowest percentages of positive responses at all three levels.

As the Greenberg-Lake group writes, "teachers have a special opportunity to affect the self-esteem of their female students, and, by instilling confidence, to shape their interests and aspirations." But to judge by the narrowing interests and lowered aspirations of high school girls, this opportunity is often neglected.

5. A lowering of aspirations for Latinas also occurs with the diminished self-esteem.

If the percentages for each school level had been displayed in Table A, one would have seen the familiar decline in positive factors and the increase in negative factors for the three racial/ethnic groups.

This decline in classroom encouragement correlates with a decline over the years in appreciation by adolescent females for subjects like math and science. To illustrate, 86 percent of the elementary school Latinas said they liked math but only about half (52 percent) said so on the high school level — a drop of 34 percentage points. The pattern was about the same for African-American and white females, except that the drop was only about half as steep — 17 percent and 18 percent.

The pattern for girls who like science are similar to math, except that Latinas and African-American females start out at the elementary school level at least 15 percentage points below in positive responses compared to the positive response to math.

For Latinas, the favorable response to the science question goes from 71 percent in elementary school to 49 percent in high school (a negative 22 percent change). While the negative change for African-Americans is similar to the Latina change, the negative 44 percent change for whites is even steeper, from 79 percent in elementary school to 35 percent in high school.

A lowering of occupational aspirations also occurs for Latinas and African-American females, but not for white females. The girls on the three school levels were asked "do you think you will end up being" about nine specific occupations. (Because "homemaker" was discussed earlier, it has been dropped from this list.) In comparing responses at the elementary and high school levels, the percentage of Latinas who thought they would end up as *doctors* and *construction workers* rose 2 and 3 percentage points. The responses for *scientist* remained the same at 19 percent. The responses for *nurse*, *teacher*, *lawyer*, *sports star*, and *politician* all went down. Except for *lawyer*, which went down 5 percentage points, the responses were lower by about 10 or more percentage points.

For African-American females, aspirations increased only for the *nurse* and *construction worker* options. The responses to the *lawyer* and *sports star* items stayed the same. But the percentage of positive responses to the *doctor*, *teacher*, *scientist*, and *politician* items all decreased.

For white females, aspirations rose for four occupations: *nurse*, *scientist*, *lawyer* (16 percentage points), and *politician*. The responses stayed the same for

the *doctor*, *sports star*, and *construction worker* items. The only occupation represented that decreased for white females was the *teacher* option.

As indicated earlier, Latinas displayed the most dramatic shift in views about whether they would enjoy being homemakers (48 percent in elementary school versus 17 percent in high school), but also were the most likely to believe that even though they did not want to be homemakers, they would end up in that occupation (35 percent of the 87 percent who said in high school they did not want to be).

The combination of lowered occupational aspirations and a perceived resignation to being homemakers, spell out a grim future for many Latinas in terms of personal fulfillment. Many factors are involved in this state of affairs for Latinas; but certainly both their home and school situations are key factors.

CONCLUSION

Adolescence is a daunting period of personal challenges and adjustments for young people. Most draw on various sources — such as home, school, sports, and other activities — for the self-confidence, positive self-esteem, and support they need to face these challenges. The findings of this study show that young Latinas are less likely to find such support at home or at school, compared to other young females in the process of growing up to be women in United States society.

The difficulties of somehow changing the home situation for Latinas is obvious because the difficulties are embedded in constraints of class and cultural

tradition which will take time to overcome. Nonetheless, teachers and counselors should become more sensitive to these difficulties and support Latinas and their families in creating better opportunities for their girls' personal growth. If positive changes in the home situation for Latinas are difficult, then, perhaps schools can and do make the difference in supporting these girls' personal development.

In 1989, Morris Rosenberg and his colleagues demonstrated that the relationship between self-esteem and school performance is primarily attributable to the effect of school performance on self-esteem. Until recently, researchers have been uncertain about whether low self-esteem can be the cause or the effect of poor school performance.

This means that improved school performance should lead to improved self-esteem, and that advocates of students should concentrate on reforms that improve school performance, rather than direct efforts to improve self-esteem through curricula and courses designed specifically for that purpose.

It is hardly surprising to find in the research literature that students who take more academic courses show higher levels of academic learning. However, this non-controversial finding is often overlooked in comparisons of students' achievements.

The Greenberg-Lake survey does not include data on academic course-taking or high school tracking, but one can be certain that if the survey's sample was indeed representative, it would mean that the majority, perhaps 75 percent or more of the survey's Latinas in high school were not in the college-preparatory or

academic track. Much of the decline in poor academic performance, lowered self-esteem, and aspirations can, then, be traced in part to the drift of Latinas through middle and high school into non-academic tracks. The drift comes about because of inadequate counseling at school and lack of knowledgeable parental support at home. Parents lack practical experience in graduating from high school and continuing post-secondary education, because barely half of the adult Hispanic population has graduated from high school, and far fewer have attended college.

The literature on high school tracking sheds light on why schools that emphasize academic learning, not stratified curriculums, should foster higher self-esteem and aspirations among students.

Some of the common characteristics that researcher Jeannie Oakes (1985) found in the schools that she studied are the following:

- The grouping of students in different ability tracks created a hierarchy in schools, with students publicly labeled and valued according to the groups in which they are placed.
- High-track students had much greater access to high-status knowledge while students in the lower classes, in effect, were "locked out" of knowledge that would have allowed them to move into higher tracks.
- The classroom climate enhanced the learning possibilities of those who already were doing well as high-track students but inhibited the learning of those in the lower tracks. Indeed, the main emphasis of low-track teachers appeared to be controlling their classes, promoting good behavior, and instilling manners, rather than enhancing good learning and thinking skills.

- Peers in the low-track classes were viewed as more unfriendly and excluding, and their classrooms as places where arguing and disruption were more characteristic student exchanges. The teachers in the high-track classes were perceived as more concerned and supportive, and the peers as nonthreatening allies in the classroom.

Perhaps one of the most striking of Oakes' findings in relation to the current study is the high degree to which students' views of themselves and their plans or the future were related to their track level. Many of Jeannie Oakes' findings are corroborated in the research literature from both the 1970s and the 1980s, and are of direct relevance to the educational experiences of United States Latinas.

For Latinos in general, a tremendous need exists for detracked schooling, active and involved learning, and timely remediation. They also need good academic and career guidance, and vigilant monitoring of academic course-taking. Schools need to also involve parents in their children's educational planning.

Other reforms, no doubt, could be mentioned. The key point, however, is that reforms must be put in place that improve academic performance and lift the self-esteem and occupational aspirations of Latinas, so that they are more able to reach personal fulfillment and make important contributions to American society.

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"I like most things about myself." Percentage of females answering "always true", by race/ethnicity and grade.

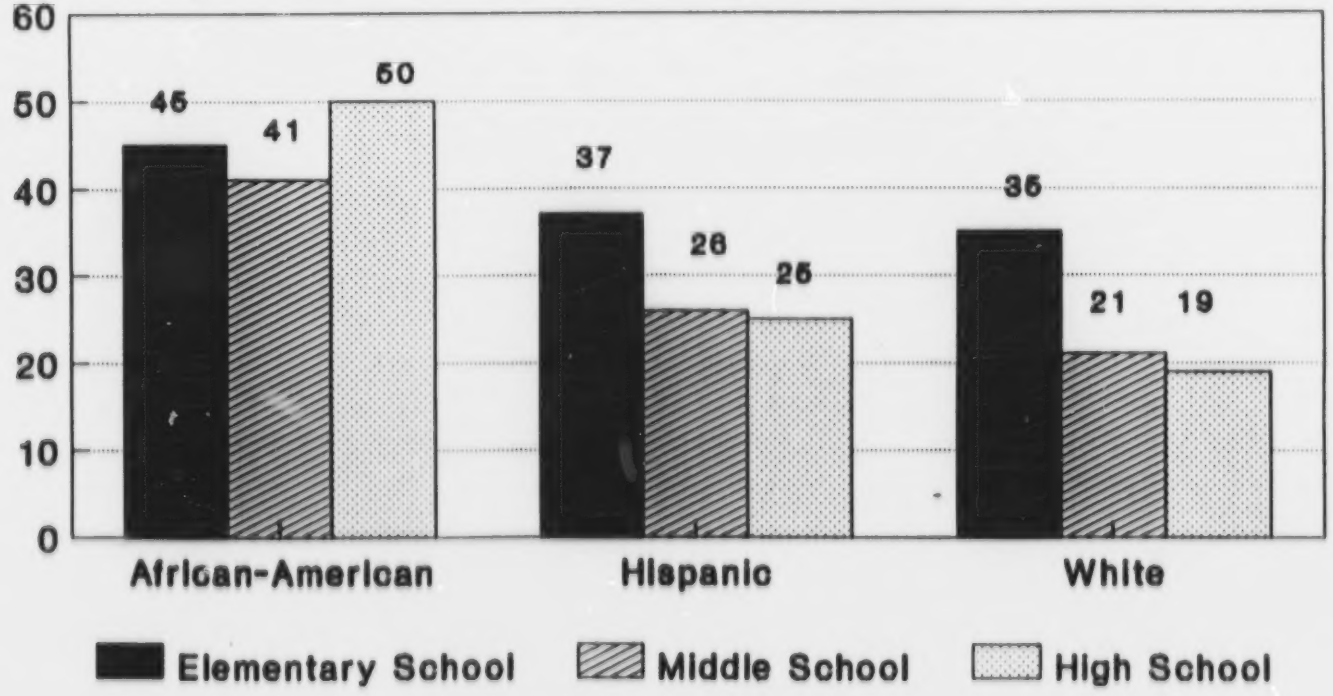


FIGURE A

"I'm happy the way I am." Percentage of females answering "always true", by race/ethnicity and grade

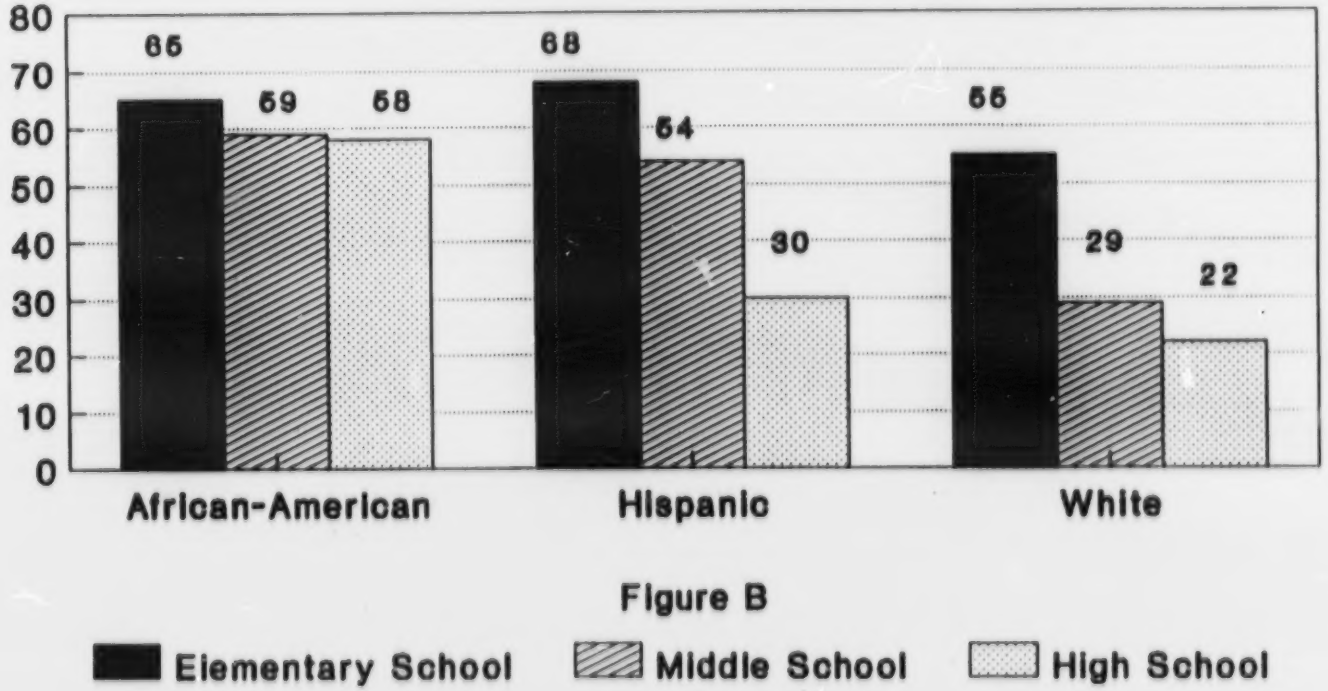


FIGURE B

"Sometimes I don't like myself that much." % of females answering "always true," by race/ethnicity and grade

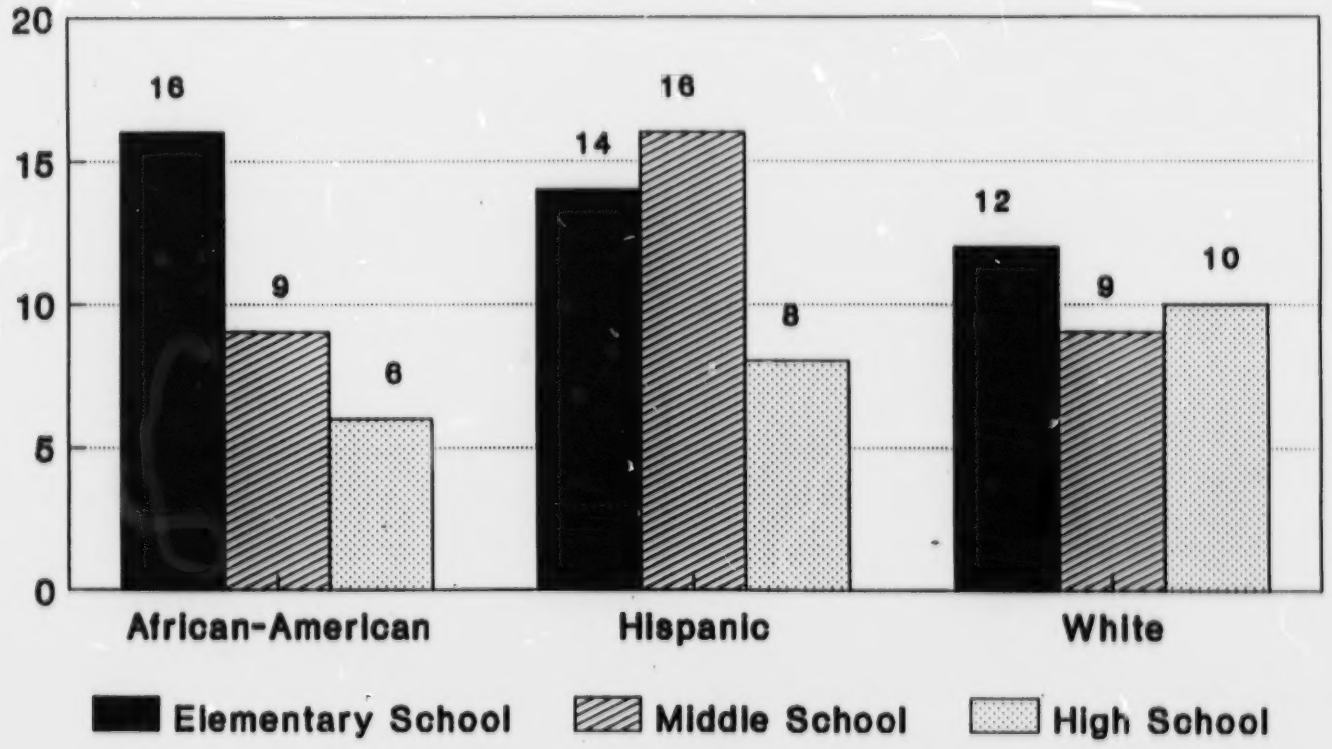


FIGURE C

"I am an important member of my family." Percentage of females answering "always true," by race/ethnicity and grade.

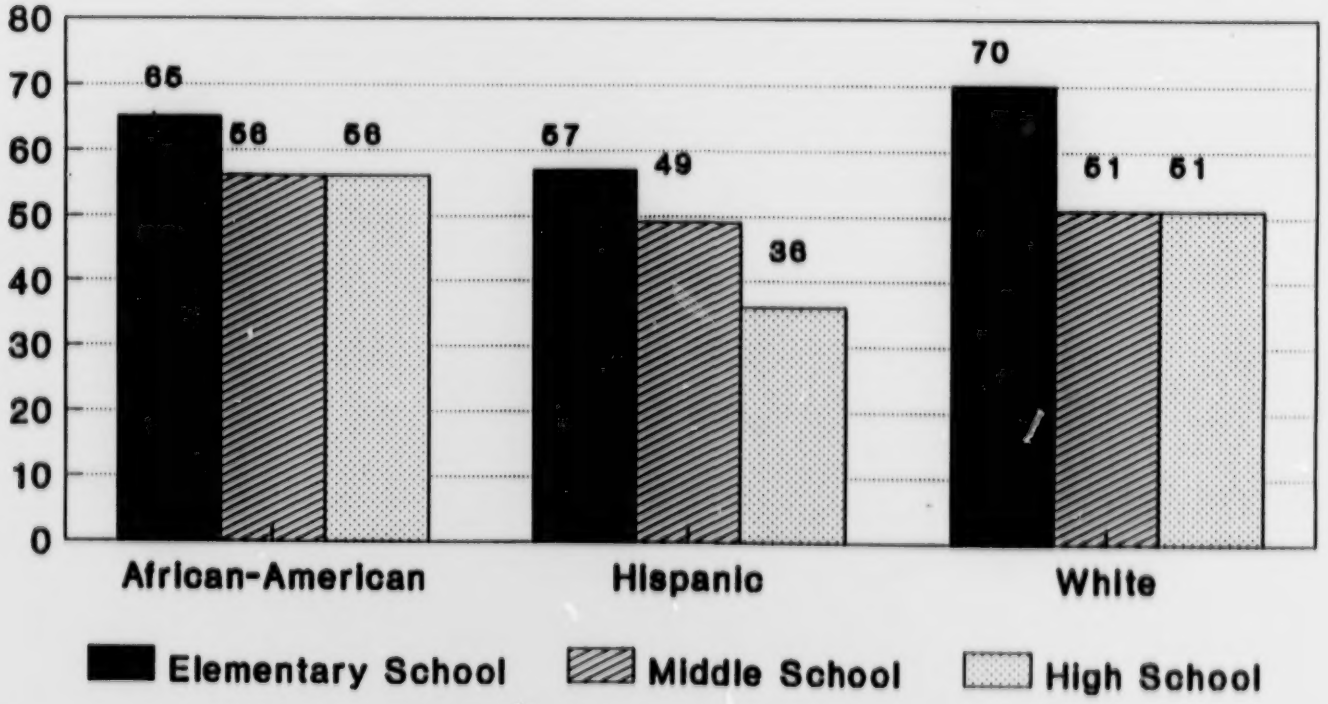


FIGURE D

"I feel good about myself when I'm with my family." % of females answering "always true," by race/ethnicity & grade

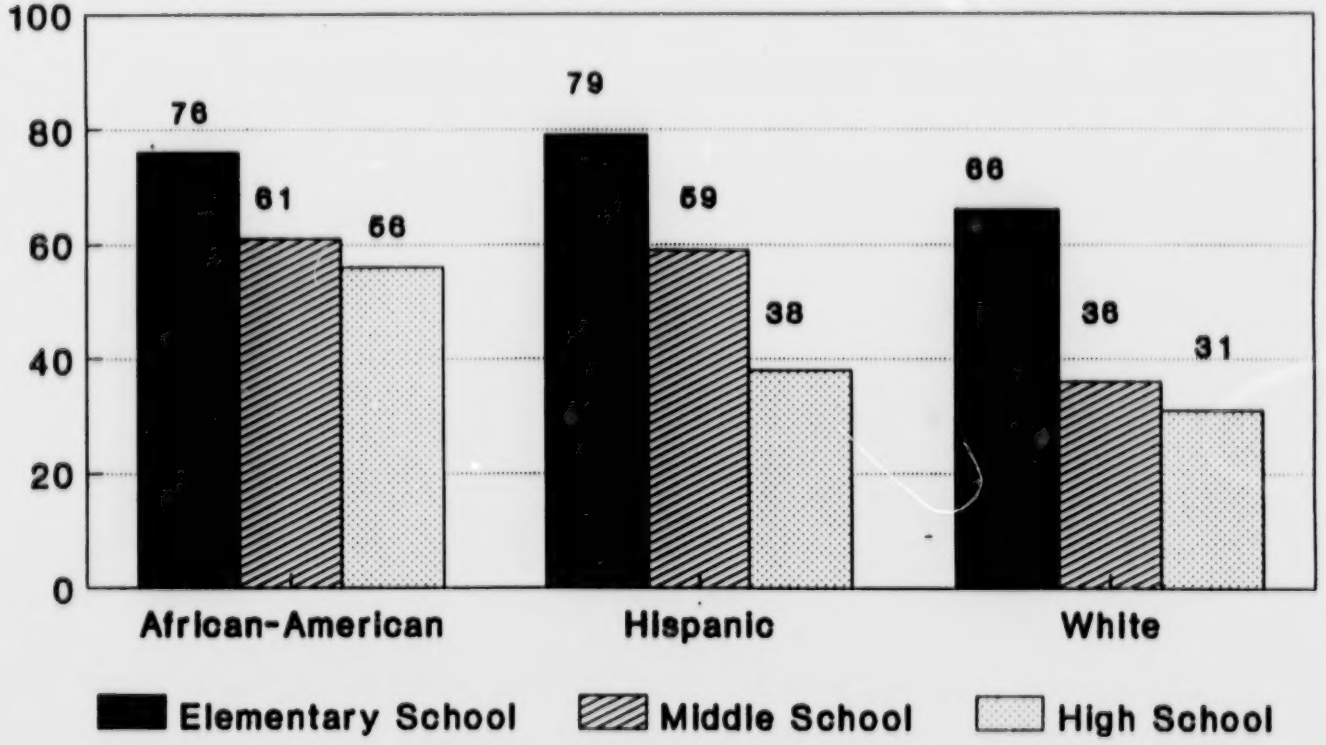
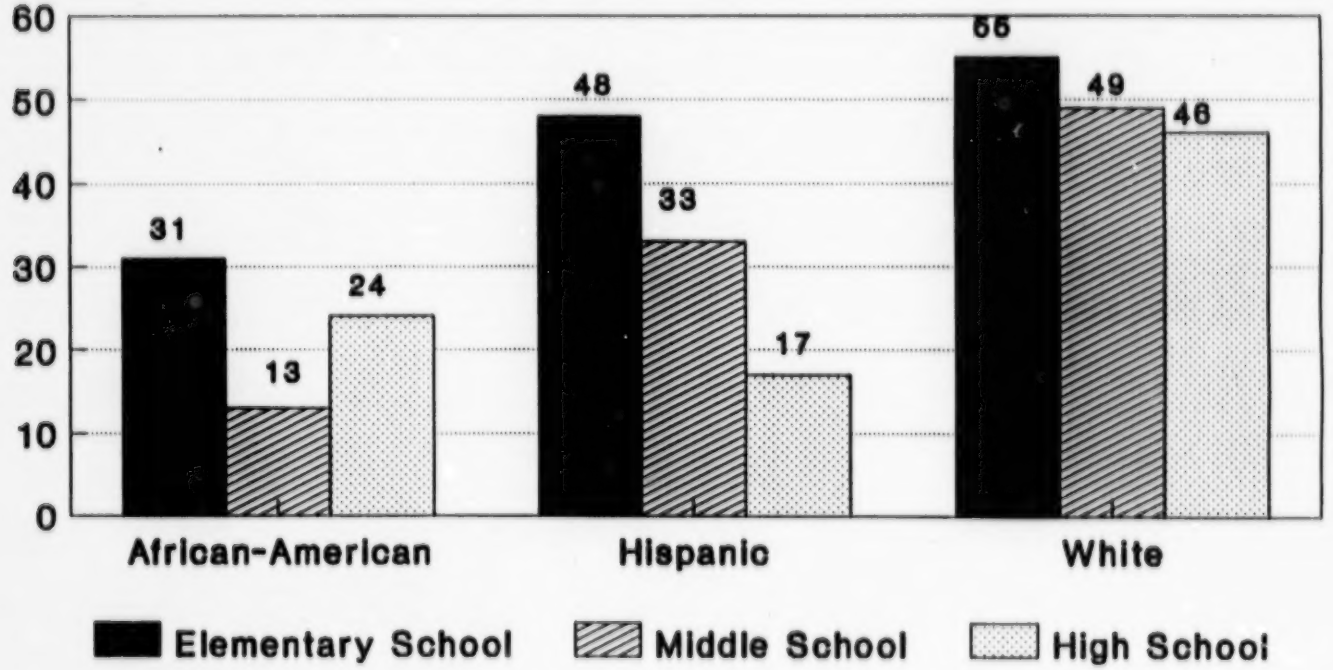


FIGURE E

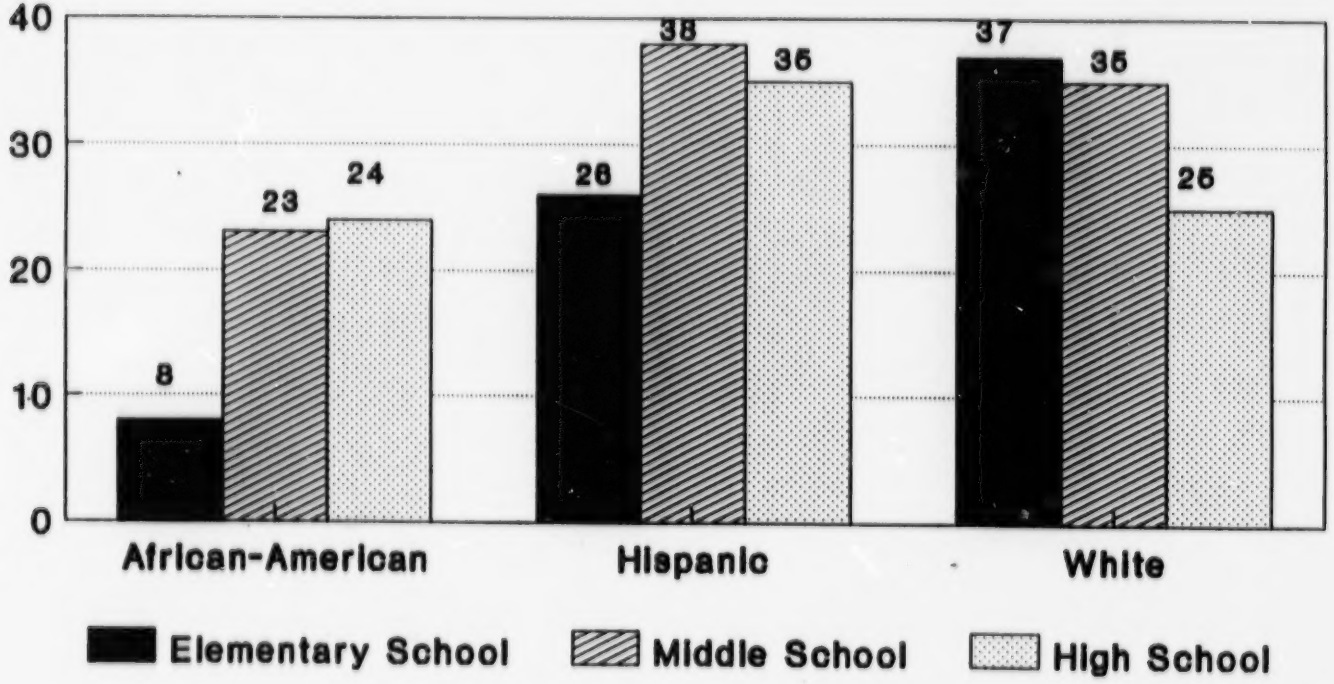
Percentage of females who reported they would like or enjoy being a homemaker * by race/ethnicity and grade



* Actual wording was "someone who stays home and takes care of children"

FIGURE F

Percentage of females who would not enjoy being a homemaker* but believe they will be by race/ethnicity and grade



* Actual wording was "someone who stays home and takes care of children"

FIGURE G

"I'm good at math." Percentage of females answering "always true," by race/ethnicity and grade.

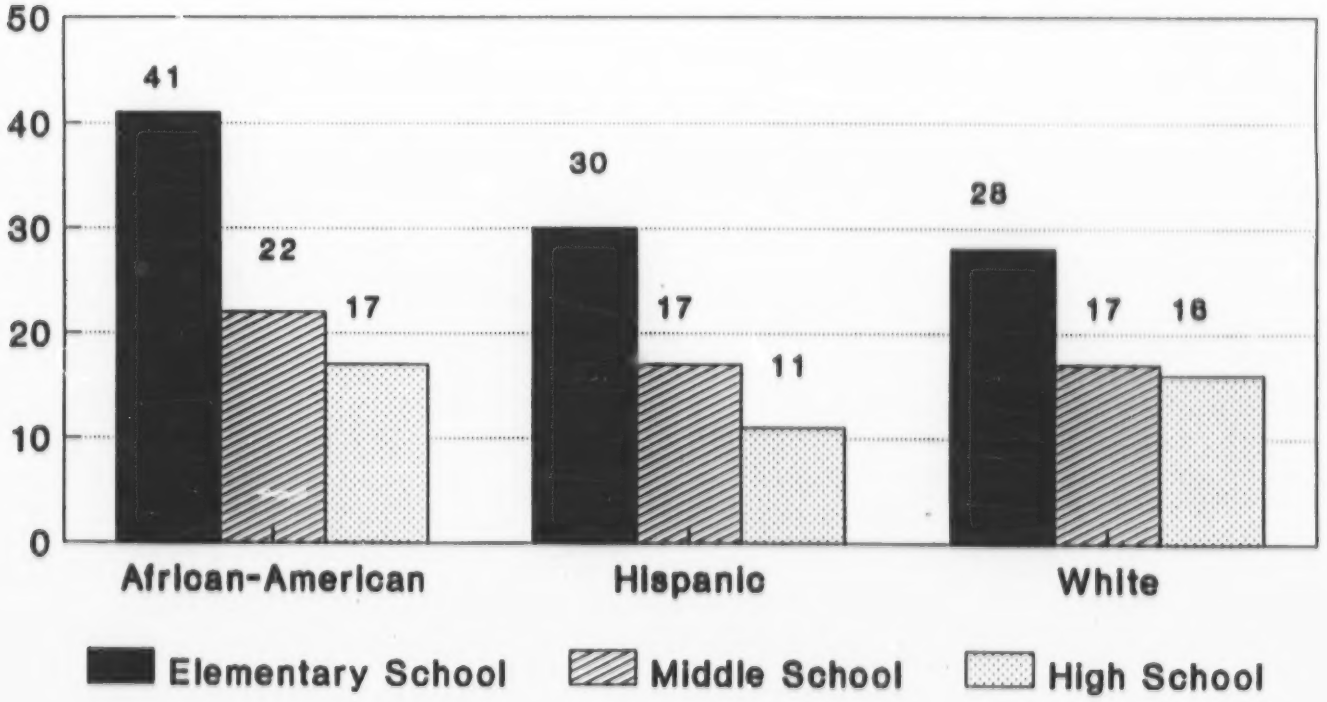


FIGURE H

"I'm pleased with my school grades." Percentage of females answering "always true," by race/ethnicity and grade.

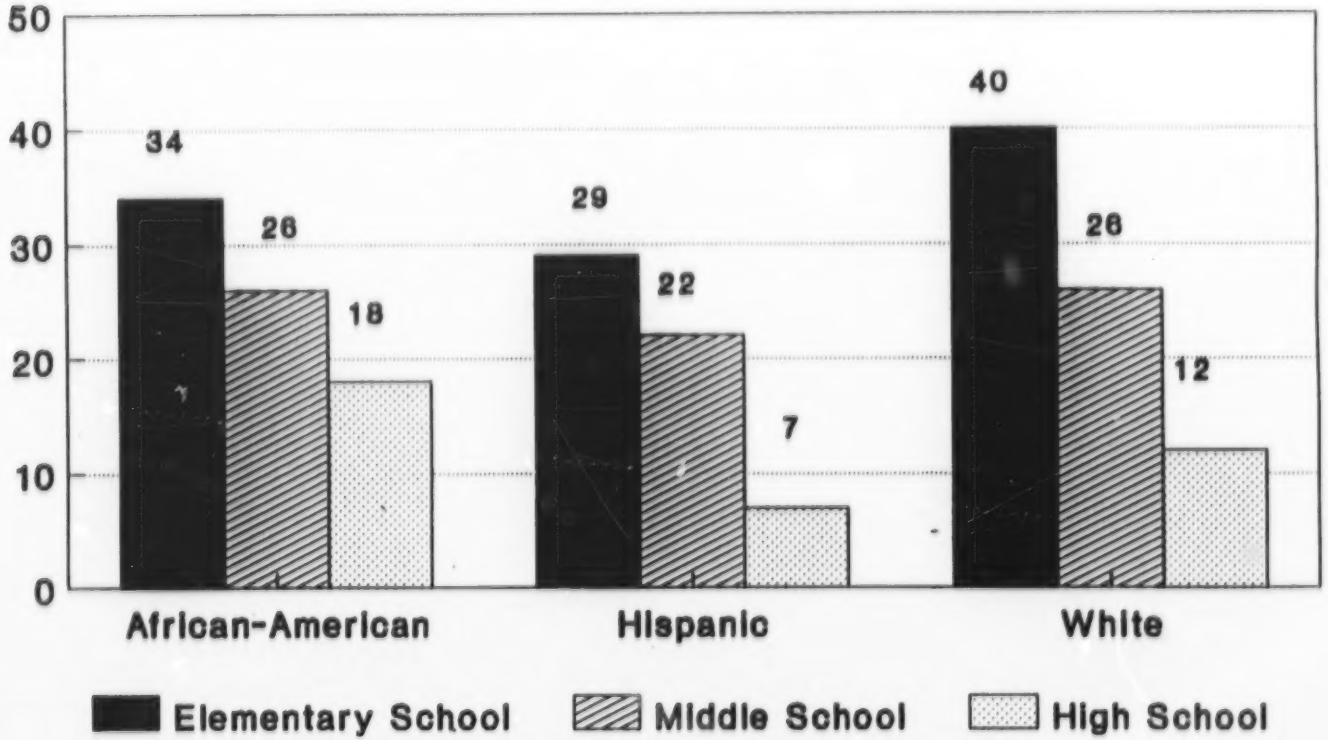


FIGURE I

"I'm pretty good at a lot of things."
Percentage of females answering "always true," by race/ethnicity and grade

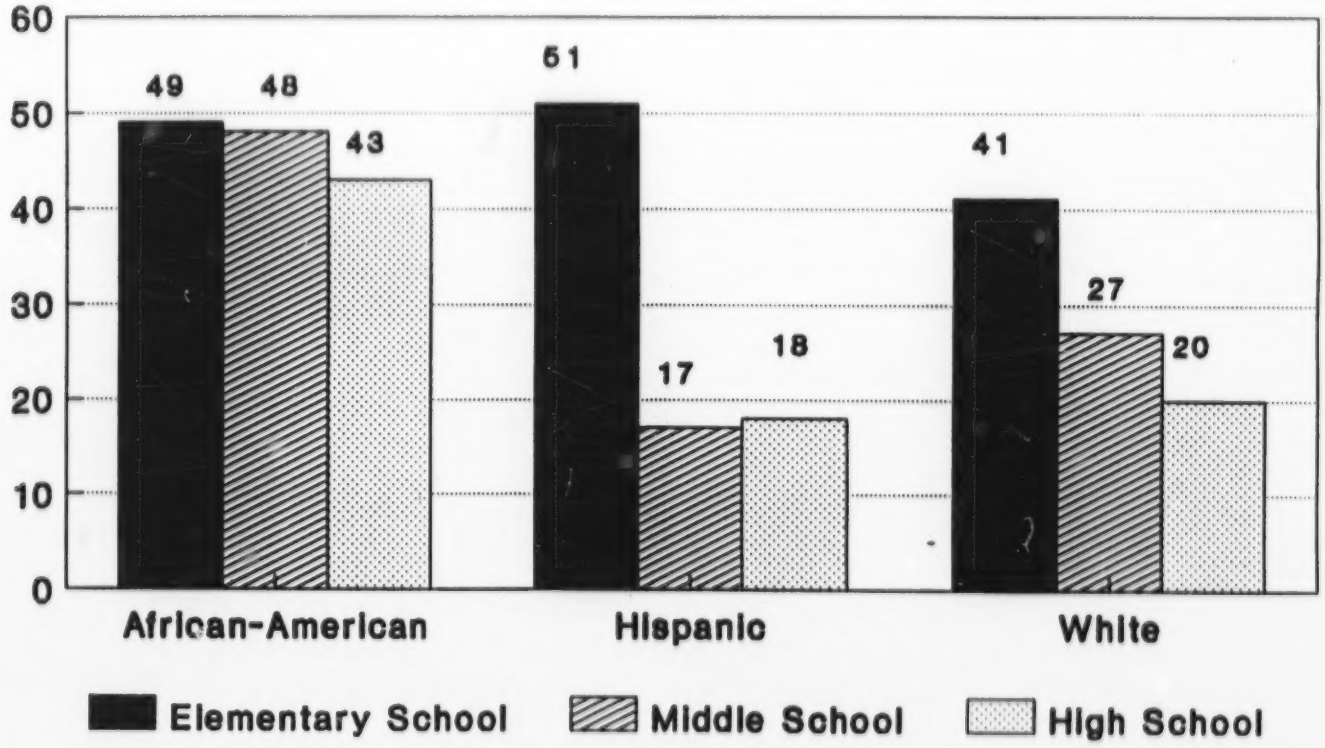


FIGURE J

"I am an important person."
Percentage of females answering "always true," by race/ethnicity and grade

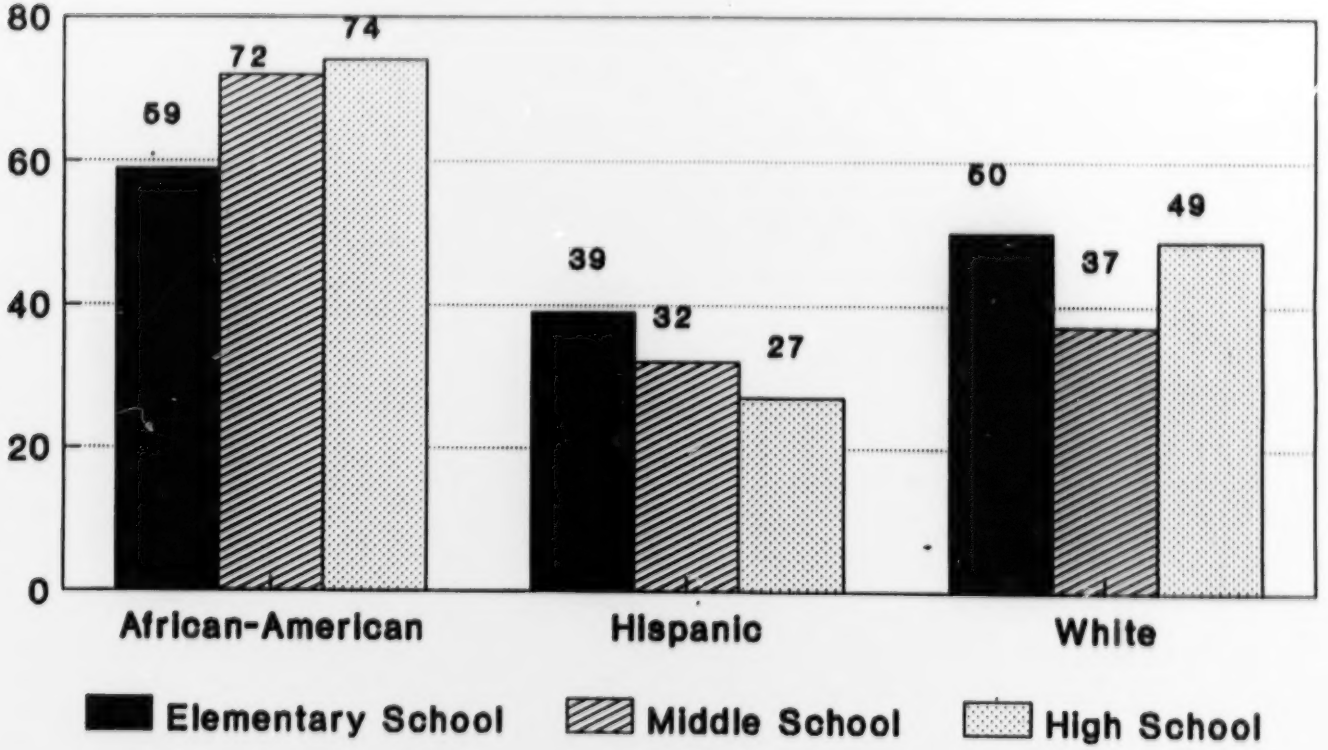


FIGURE K

Percentage of those who would enjoy being a teacher, by race/ethnicity and grade level

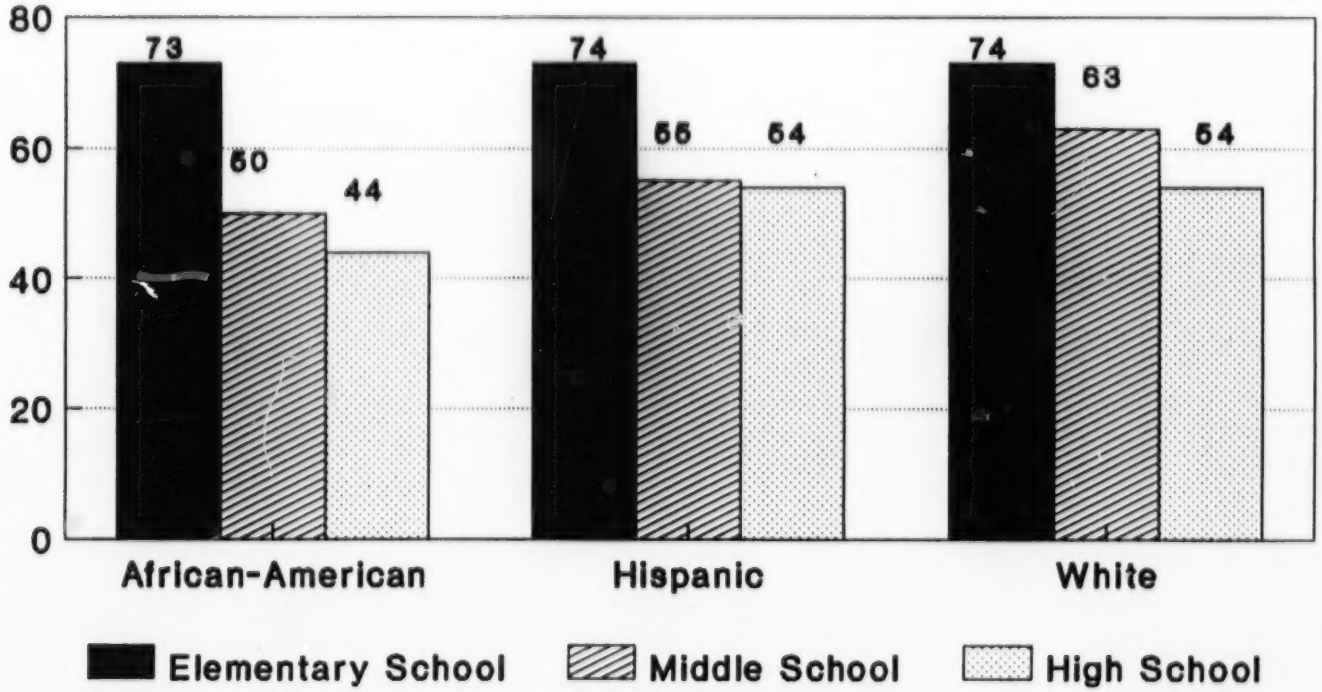


FIGURE L

"My teacher is proud of me."
Percentage of females answering "always true" by race/ethnicity and grade.

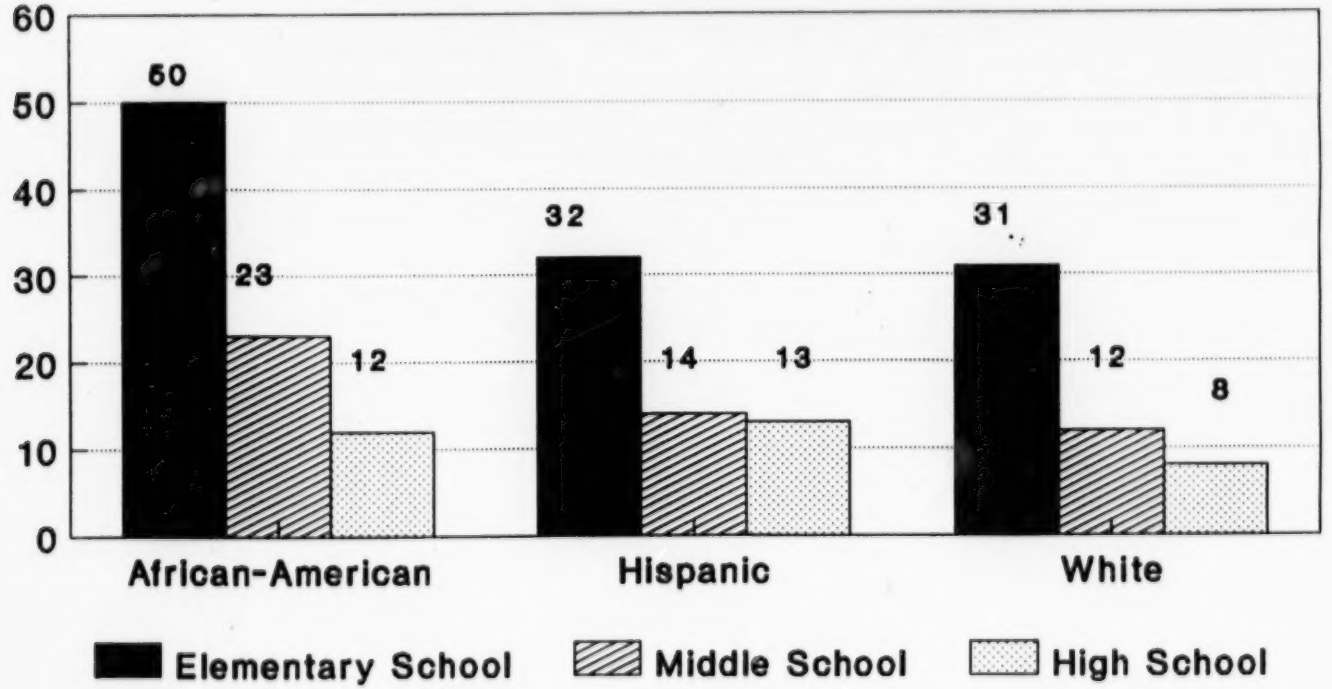


FIGURE M

Table 1: Percentage of female students who cite not liking math or science because of perceived inability,* by race/ethnicity and school level

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
Don't like math:	N = 17	12	92	46	44	223	34	33	182	97	89	497
Not smart enough	18	0	9	6	14	9	0	6	9	6	9	9
Teachers don't think I'm good	12	8	2	2	7	4	0	0	2	3	4	3
Too hard	35	42	51	43	36	37	47	27	29	43	34	37
Don't like science:	N = 34	23	93	42	48	202	42	33	163	118	104	458
Not smart enough	9	9	2	2	2	3	0	3	4	3	4	3
Teachers don't think I'm good	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	1
Too hard	24	35	17	7	13	7	14	15	10	14	18	10

* = The table presents three of seven responses to these questions. The other responses ("not useful", "working alone", and "making bad grades") were not considered indicators of self-perception.

Table 2: Percentage of female students reporting positive and negative classroom characteristics, by race/ethnicity and school level.

Characteristics		Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
		AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
	Total N =	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Positive													
Gets called on as often as others		48	49	50	51	43	65	61	59	70	53	49	62
Raises hand and answers a lot		62	49	53	55	39	53	50	30	47	55	40	51
Likes to answer questions		79	76	72	77	53	65	73	57	63	76	61	66
Likes to ask questions		77	66	58	65	43	49	58	48	48	66	51	51
Teacher calls on me*		45	30	35	46	33	41	54	33	38	48	32	39
Speaks out		41	40	38	56	36	43	47	41	42	55	43	54
Negative													
Knows something and teacher doesn't recognize		76	82	71	81	80	77	74	72	74	78	78	75
Have things to say and teacher won't allow		61	61	65	71	66	70	57	51	52	64	61	63

* = Combined "a lot" and "often" responses.

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of self-esteem improvement index scores, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N =	101	84	448	158	134	705	103	73	476	362	291	1,629
Net improvement	46	58	55	63	59	67	54	66	72	56	60	65
No change	49	37	38	35	37	29	45	32	25	41	35	30
Net decline	6	5	6	2	4	4	1	3	3	3	4	4

Note: Net improvement = likes self better this year and likes self better next year
likes self same this year and likes self better next yea
likes self better this year and likes self same next yea

No change = likes self same this year and likes self same next year
likes self worse this year and likes self better next year
likes self better this year and likes self worse next year

Net decline = likes self worse this year and likes self same next year
likes self same this year and likes self worse next year
likes self worse this year and likes self worse next year

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Table 4: Scholarly Aspirations -- Percentage of female students who like technical/creative subjects by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N =	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Like math	83	86	79	71	69	68	66	52	61	73	70	69
Like science	66	71	79	72	65	71	42	49	35	66	64	72
Favorite subject is technical	42	40	39	38	46	32	38	44	27	39	44	32
Favorite subject is creative	33	37	49	37	36	44	32	26	48	34	34	47
1st and 2nd favorite subject is technical	8	8	9	17	14	9	14	4	7	14	10	8

* Technical = math science, computers are favorite subjects
  Creative = English, art, drama, writing, language are favorite subjects

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N.

Table 5: Career Aspirations, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N =	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Believe they will be what they dream of being	41	37	28	37	45	32	39	44	36	38	42	32
Percentage of those who would enjoy being and believe they will be:*												
Doctor	81	59	64	77	57	64	63	67	55	74	60	61
Nurse	75	81	60	77	60	62	75	68	70	76	68	64
Teacher	82	77	78	84	79	76	82	82	80	83	79	77
Scientist	71	56	49	63	38	61	48	69	60	59	49	58
Lawyer	88	82	69	78	64	69	72	64	69	79	69	69
Sports star	88	55	60	73	52	51	59	37	46	71	49	51
Construction worker	75	38	48	50	55	45	62	71	62	62	54	51
Homemaker/mother	85	87	88	95	86	87	88	75	91	89	85	88
Politician	78	71	50	53	37	48	42	48	50	55	48	49
Percentage of those who wouldn't enjoy being a homemaker/mother but believe they will be	8	26	37	23	38	35	24	35	25	20	35	32

Table 6: Self-esteem measures for female students, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N =	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Average self-esteem score ++	20.2	19.0	18.7	20.0	17.5	17.3	20.4	17.6	17.2	20.1	18.0	17.7
Percentage above average	52%	46%	43%	45%	46%	49%	58%	36%	51%	50%	48%	43%
Percentage who responded "always true" to the following:												
I like most things about myself.	45	37	35	41	26	21	50	25	19	45	29	24
I like the way I look.	72	47	31	53	21	11	58	11	12	60	26	17
I'm happy the way I am.	65	68	55	59	54	29	58	30	22	60	52	34
Percentage who responded "always false" to the following:												
I wish I were someone else.	60	54	48	47	41	32	59	40	36	54	44	38
Sometimes I don't like myself that much.	38	22	22	32	13	9	37	13	11	35	15	13

++ = Scores ranged from 5 (lowest self-esteem) to 25 (highest self-esteem). These scores represent a summary measure of the questionnaire items on this table.

* = Likert scale responses were: (1) always true; (2) sort of true; (3) sometimes true/sometimes false; (4) sort of false; (5) always false.

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N.

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Table 7: Measures of isolation, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N =	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Average isolation score ++	11.9	12.8	10.8	11.8	11.4	10.5	13.2	11.9	11.7	11.6	11.3	10.5
Percentage above average	45%	31%	69%	44%	66%	79%	44%	65%	61%	47%	67%	80%
Percentage responding "always true" to the following":*												
People really know the real me.	26	36	31	13	16	25	10	13	17	15	21	24
People know I have good ideas.	14	21	19	11	12	14	10	9	12	11	14	14
Other kids make me feel I'm good enough.	47	31	26	37	30	25	50	31	24	43	31	25
Teachers make me feel I'm good enough.	52	43	48	49	44	39	52	34	38	51	41	41

++ = Scores ranged from 4 (high isolation/low self-esteem measure) to 20 (low isolation/high self-esteem measure). These scores represent a summary measure of the questionnaire items on this table.

* = These questions were stated in the negative on the original questionnaire. They have been re-worded for clarity.

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N.

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Table 8: Measures of family importance, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total	
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N=	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Average family importance score	12.0	10.8	12.9	10.6	13.6	11.7	10.4	10.3	11.7	12.5	11.7	12.0
Percentage above average	4%	4%	1%	1%	1%	3%	4%	7%	3%	1%	4%	3%
Percent responding "always true to the following: or "sort of" true:												
I am an important member of my family.	63	57	70	56	47	51	55	36	50	58	47	56
I feel good about myself with my family.	76	79	66	61	59	36	56	38	31	64	59	43
I am an important person.	59	39	50	72	32	37	74	27	40	69	33	42

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N.

Table 9: Measures of Academic Self-Esteem, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N=	101	84	450	159	155	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Average academic self-esteem score	15.9	16.3	17.2	15.3	19.2	21.2	15.3	14.8	18.4	16.5	18.7	21.4
Percentage above average	14%	27%	13%	36%	17%	5%	35%	59%	21%	17%	14%	4%
Percentage responding "always true" to the following:												
I'm proud of the work I do in school	69	48	44	39	31	22	27	19	14	44	33	26
I'm good at math.	41	30	28	22	17	17	17	11	16	25	19	20
My teacher is proud of me.	50	32	31	23	14	12	12	13	8	27	19	16
I'm pretty good at a lot of things.	49	51	41	48	17	27	43	18	20	47	27	29
*I'm pleased with my school grades.	34	29	40	26	21	26	18	7	12	26	20	26
My teachers always listen to my ideas.	33	23	29	24	19	13	18	14	10	25	19	17
I'm good at reading.	57	42	48	49	29	46	68	26	47	57	32	47

*This question was stated in the negative on the original questionnaire. It has been re-worded for clarity.

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N.

Table 10: Measures of Voice, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N=	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Percentage responding "always true" to the following:												
I speak up in class a lot.	47	25	22	27	10	17	29	14	17	33	16	18
I argue with my teachers when I think I'm right.	17	21	6	26	24	12	29	19	19	24	22	13
I can make friends when I want to.	37	37	31	46	26	27	55	29	31	46	30	29
*People think I'm outspoken.	24	12	25	32	24	30	20	22	30	26	20	29

*This question was stated in the negative on the original questionnaire. It has been re-worded for clarity.

Table 11: Measures of Acceptance, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N=	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Average acceptance score	8.3	9.2	8.4	10.3	8.7	8.3	9.2	7.2	8.8	8.9	8.7	8.5
Percentage above average	65%	56%	68%	36%	49%	69%	41%	75%	46%	45%	48%	68%
Percentage answering "always true" to the following:												
*I like to do things that make me feel different from my friends.	20	17	16	21	16	12	20	21	15	21	17	14
*I like to work by myself.	19	21	15	22	13	8	20	7	7	21	14	10
I worry about other kids liking me.	35	26	23	31	30	12	34	19	10	33	26	15

*This question was stated in the negative on the original questionnaire. It has been re-worded for clarity.

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N.

Table 12: Family Size and Parent Status, by race/ethnicity and school level.

	Elementary			Middle			High			Total		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N=	101	84	450	159	135	706	103	73	476	363	292	1,632
Percentage in single parent family	41%	22%	14%	46%	19%	17%	53%	26%	21%	47%	21%	17%
*Average family size	5.4	5.6	4.9	5.6	5.8	4.9	5.9	5.6	4.7	5.6	5.7	4.8
Average number of siblings	2.9	2.8	2.0	3.0	3.1	2.1	3.5	2.8	1.9	3.1	2.9	2.0

*Family size includes respondent.

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N.

Table 13A: Pearson correlation matrix of self-esteem indicators*, family size, and single-parent status for Hispanic female students.

TOTAL N = 258	Family Size	Single Parent Parents++	Self-Esteem Overall	Isolation	Academic Self-Esteem	Family Importance	Acceptance
Family Size	1.000						
Single Parent Status	0.238	1.000					
Self-Esteem Overall	-0.056	-0.001	1.000				
Isolation	0.043	-0.052	-0.307	1.000			
Academic Self-Esteem	-0.057	-0.059	0.476	-0.208	1.000		
Family Importance	0.043	-0.030	0.382	-0.116	0.470	1.000	
Acceptance	-0.052	0.117	0.192	-0.212	-0.107	-0.071	1.000

* The self-esteem indicators in this table are represented in more detail in tables 6-12.

++ Single parent status represents a higher numerical value.

Table 13B: Pearson correlation matrix of self-esteem indicators*, family size, and single-parent status for African-American female students.

TOTAL N = 295	Family Size	Single Parent Parents++	Self-Esteem Overall	Isolation	Academic Self-Esteem	Family Importance	Acceptance
Family Size	1.000						
Single Parent Status	0.258	1.000					
Self-Esteem Overall	0.044	0.015	1.000				
Isolation	0.002	0.014	-0.308	1.000			
Academic Self-Esteem	0.141	0.105	0.360	-0.239	1.000		
Family Importance	0.094	-0.025	0.471	-0.198	0.400	1.000	
Acceptance	0.031	-0.001	0.309	-0.416	0.084	0.104	1.000

* The self-esteem indicators in this table are represented in more detail in tables 6-12.

++ Single parent status represents a higher numerical value.

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Table 13C: Pearson correlation matrix of self-esteem indicators*, family size, and single-parent status for white female students.

TOTAL N = 1,476	Family Size	Single Parent Parents++	Self-Esteem Overall	Isolation	Academic Self-Esteem	Family Importance	
Family Size	1.000						
Single Parent Status	0.236	1.000					
Self-Esteem Overall	0.031	0.071	1.000				
Isolation	-0.055	-0.033	-0.433	1.000			
Academic Self-Esteem	0.038	0.094	0.491	-0.392	1.000		
Family Importance	0.056	0.025	0.531	-0.289	0.501	1.000	
Acceptance	0.008	0.034	0.218	-0.257	0.051	0.060	1.000

* The self-esteem indicators in this table are represented in more detail in tables 6-12.

++ Single parent status represents a higher numerical value.

Table 14: Self-esteem indicators for female students, by race/ethnicity, and by single-parent status.

	African-American		Hispanic		White	
	SP	NSP	SP	NSP	SP	NSP
N=	159	182	61	223	276	1,331
Percentage	47%	53%	21%	79%	17%	83%
*'Percentage scoring in the "very positive" range for self-esteem measures						
General self-esteem	49%	54%	24%	32%	18%	26%
Academic self-esteem	46%	50%	29%	34%	31%	41%
Isolation**	20%	23%	28%	20%	27%	31%
Acceptance**	20%	22%	13%	21%	20%	21%
Family importance	64%	68%	48%	48%	51%	52%

Note: The number of students responding to each item varied slightly from the total N. Self-esteem measures are derived from combined questionnaire items.

General self-esteem is an index combining student responses to five items about liking themselves (the way they look, how happy they are with themselves, etc.)

Academic self-esteem is an index combining student responses to seven items being good at it, being pleased with their grades).

Isolation is an index combining student responses to four items about how much they are known to others and how good other people make them feel about themselves. The items on the questionnaire were stated in the negative, but the percentages reported here represent that portion of the females who scored in the "very positive" (i.e., least isolated) range.

Acceptance is an index combing student responses to three items about how much they depend on the opinions of others for their own self esteem. The percentages reported here represent that portion of the females who scored in the "very positive" (i.e., least dependent on the opinions of others) range.

Family importance is an index combing student responses to three items about feeling good and important in their families.

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Table 15: Positive attributes of female students, by race/ethnicity, and by single-parent status.

	African-American		Hispanic		White	
	SP	NSP	SP	NSP	SP	NSP
N=	159	182	61	225	276	1,331
Percentage	47%	53%	21%	79%	17%	83%
Percentage of respondents:						
Who like math	71%	74%	67%	72%	68%	69%
Who like science	61%	72%	58%	65%	71%	72%
Who believe they will be what they dream of being	35%	40%	46%	41%	37%	31%
Whose favorite subject is technical	41%	40%	48%	44%	32%	32%
Whose favorite subject is creative	36%	30%	33%	33%	47%	47%

Table 16: Positive attributes of female students, with high self esteem indices by race/ethnicity, and by single-parent status.

	General Self Esteem			Academic Self Esteem			Family Importance			Isolation*			Acceptance*		
	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W	AA	H	W
N=	175	82	387	154	88	595	232	137	818	75	62	476	73	55	332
Percentage of respondents:															
Who like math	76%	74%	79%	83%	82%	85%	75%	72%	75%	76%	69%	75%	64%	78%	73%
Who like science	73%	70%	78%	70%	65%	74%	70%	71%	77%	74%	63%	75%	64%	63%	67%
Who believe they will be what they dream of being	30%	31%	20%	29%	33%	24%	33%	34%	25%	21%	24%	23%	38%	39%	40%
Whose favorite subject is technical	43%	51%	38%	50%	52%	39%	44%	40%	35%	43%	44%	36%	40%	44%	34%
Whose favorite subject is creative	33%	30%	43%	30%	35%	44%	32%	44%	45%	37%	39%	43%	40%	36%	45%

General self-esteem is an index combining student responses to five items about liking themselves (the way they look, how happy they are with themselves, etc.)

Academic self-esteem is an index combining student responses to seven items being good at it, being pleased with their grades).

Isolation is an index combining student responses to four items about how much they are known to others and how good other people make them feel about themselves. The items on the questionnaire were stated in the negative, but the percentages reported here represent that portion of the females who scored in the "very positive" (i.e., least isolated) range.

Acceptance is an index combing student responses to three items about how much they depend on the opinions of others for their own self esteem. The percentages reported here represent that portion of the females who scored in the "very positive" (i.e., least dependent on the opinions of others) range.

Family importance is an index combing student responses to three items about feeling good and important in their families.

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